Sharenting

Sharenting (or **oversharenting**) is the overuse of social media by parents to share content based on their children, such as baby pictures or details of their children's activities.[1] It is related to the concept of "too much information".[2] There is an ongoing debate as to how parents can balance their right to share with their child's interest in privacy.[3] Pediatricians are starting to consider how sharenting affects childhood well-being and family life.[4]

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History

It has been stated that *The Wall Street Journal* created the term,[5] where they called it "oversharenting", a combination of "over-sharing" and "parenting". The practice stems from the connected nature of social media early-adopters, who are comfortable sharing their lives online. When they had children, they began to share large numbers of pictures online.[6] It has since been the focus of a number of articles on the subject and was one of *Time*'s words of the day in February 2013.[7]

Popularity

The popularity of sharing baby pictures has resulted in a backlash that includes anti-sharenting sites and apps that block the pictures.[8] The blog STFU Parents was founded in 2009 to lampoon parents' over-sharing on social media. The site itself became controversial for what parents said was taking posts out of context. Parents also stated that the communities dedicated to sharenting found the content useful, even if it was ridiculed as pointless by other communities.[9] Fisher-Price conducted a survey in Australia that found that 90% of Australian parents admitted to over-sharing.[10] Eircom conducted a survey in Ireland that found that while the practice was widespread, only 5% of Irish parents claimed to be sharenters. About three-quarters (74%) of parents who use social media say they have seen another parent "oversharent", according to a 2015 University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.[11] Clinical psychologist David Coleman said that Irish parents were "in denial" and unwilling to admit to their behavior.[12]

Risks

In extreme forms, parental sharing of their children's information has led to a phenomenon labeled "digital kidnapping", whereby children's photos and details have been appropriated by others who promote such kids as being their own children.[13] Research has shown that millions of innocent photographs, end up on paedophilic and hebephilic websites.[14]

Controversy

The *Wall Street Journal* quoted psychiatry professor Elias Aboujaoude, who said that sharenting can turn parenthood into a competition for attention.[6] The practice has also been linked to online predators, who could use the information for child grooming.[5] Children's self-esteem can be affected by negative online reactions,[15] and they may have trouble forming their self-identity separate from the online persona created by parents.[16] Due to children's possible discomfort with having their lives involuntarily documented online, the Family Online Safety Institute advises that parents discuss these issues with their older children and teenagers.[17]

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